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A
LETTER
FROM A
Parliament man
TO HIS
FRIEND,
Concerning the Proceedings of the
House of COMMONS this
last Sessions, begun the 13th of
October, 1675.

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 LETTER from a
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 To his FRIEND,
 Concerning the Proceedings of the
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SIR,

I See you are greatly Scandalized at our slow and confus'd Proceedings. I confess you have cause enough, but were you but within these Walls for one half day, and saw the strange Make and Comp'lexion that this House is of, you would wonder as much that ever you wondred it it : For we are such a pied Parliament, that none can say of what Colour we are ; for we consist of old Cavaliers, old Round-heads, Indigent Courtiers, and true Country Gentlemen ; the two latter are most numerous, and would in probability bring things to some Issue, were they not clogged with the humerous uncertainties of the former. For the old Cavalier grown Aged, and almost past his Vice, is damnable Godly, and makes his doating Piety more a Plague to the

the World, than his youthful *Debauchery* was : For he so much a *By-got* to the *Bishops*, that he forces his *Loyalty* strike *Sail* to his *Religion*, and could be content to pare the *Nails* a little of the *Civil Government*, so you would but him sharpen the *Ecclesiastical Tallons*; which behaviour his so exasperates the *Round-head*, that he on the other hand cares not what increases the *Interest* of the *Crown* receive so he can but diminish that of the *Miter*: so that the *Round-head* had rather enslave the *Man*, than the *Conscience*; The *Cavalier* rather the *Conscience* than the *Man*, there being sufficient stock of Animosity as proper Matter to work upon.

Upon these therefore the *Courtier* mutually plays : For if any *Anticourt motion* be made, he gains the *Round-head* either to oppose or absent, by telling them, *If they will joyne him now, he will joyne with them for Liberty of Conscience*. And when any Affair is started on the behalf of the *Countray*, he assures the *Cavaliers*, *If they will then stand by him, he will then joyne with them in promoting a Bill against the Fanaticues*. Thus play they on both hands, that no Motion of a publick nature is made, but they win upon the one or other of them ; and by this Art gain a Majority against the *Countray Gentlemen*, which otherwise they would never have : Wherefore it were happy that we had neither *Round-head*, nor *Cavalier* in the House; for they are each of them so Pre-judicate against the other, that their sitting here signifies nothing but their Fostering their old *Venome*, and lying at Catch to snap every advantage to bear down each other, though it be in the destruction of their *Countray*.

For if the *Round-heads* bring in a good *Bill*, the old *Cavalier* opposes it; for no other reason, but because they brought it in. So that as the poor *English Silk-weavers*, are feign to hire a *French-man* to Sell their *Ribbons*: So are the *Round-heads* a *Cavalier*, to move for those *Bills* they desire should pass ; which so sowers the *Round-head*, that he revenges that Carriage upon any *Bill* the *Cavalier* offers ; and the Rage and Passion of the one and other, are so powerful, that it blinds them both, that neither perceives the Advan-

ge they give the *Courtier*, to abuse both *them* and their
ountry too : so that if either of them do any *Good*, it is
nly out of pure Envy against the other. Thus you see how
we are yoaked, and seeing this, you may cease your admira-
on that we offer at all, and do just *nothing*.

Nor is this Division alone of the *Huse* all we have to
ment (for Death, that common Cure, does now every day
fseen this evil) but that which is more our misery, is, that
ose Gentlemen who are truly for the *Good* of their *Country*,
will not be perswaded to stand upon the sure Basis of *Rati-
onal Principles* (like Workmen too presumptive of their Judg-
ments that will not Build by rule) but rather affect the most
ose standing on the Sandy foundation of Heat and Hu-
our : By reason of which they often do as much harm as
ood, and yet perceive it not ; this is the sore evil we are
nder. For I would not doubt the *Countries* carrying it from
the *Court* in every Vote, let the *Courtiers* use all the Art they
ould, would the *Country Gentlemen* but give themselves the
ouble to enform their understandings a little, and not suffer
emselves to be hurried by a heedless Inadvertency into vulgar
lotions. Which, if well examined, are directly contrary to
eir honest intentions ; For lack of which they totally mistake
eir *Interest*, fall foul on their *Friends*, support their *Enemies*,
nd carry on the designs of the *Court*, whilst they aim at the
ervice of their *Country*. For if they would take the pains
ut to think what is the greatest *Enemy* in the World, that
English Law and Liberty always *bad*, still *bath*, and ever must
be ; It may be the result of such a thought would say, it was
Incroaching Prerogative. Well, if then they would but beg
om themselves but so much seriousness, as to think this *se-
cond thought*, to check this *Prerogative*, which is so dangerous
n *Enemy* to our *Laws and Liberties*, peradventure that
hought would answer, *In suppressing all they could its Crea-
tures and Dependants, and supporting such, whose Interest it is*
to keep Prerogative within its just bounds. Now could they be
revail'd with but to think a third thought, it would Land
hem at the full and satisfactory Solution of the Question,
nd will hold in every thing. But I will put it in a *Case*

wherein we are most apt to Err, and wherein we reckon no less than Piety to play the Fool; to the end you may see how miserably we are cheated and abused, by sucking in the untried Notions that Education, the Arts of others, or our own Ignorance have imposed upon us.

The third thought therefore shall be this: *Which are most the Creatures and Supporters of boundless Prerogative, Prelate, or dissenting Protestants?* The answer to which must, and can be no otherwise, *The Prelates*. Well then, if we would not reduce this to Practice, and say, *The greatest Friends to Prerogative are the Prelates, the greatest Enemies to our Laws and Liberties is Prerogative.* The only way therefore to restrain Prerogative, is to do, *What?* To fortifie and strengthen the Yoke of the Prelates over the Neck of the People? No. (Surely this were an odd and a barbarous kind of Reasoning. But to give Liberty to dissenting Protestants, as the best means to keep up the Ballance against boundless Prerogative. For these must and never can be otherwise (unless by Accident, and by Mistake) than Friends to Liberty: But the Prelates neither are nor can be otherwise than Creatures to Prerogative, for all their Promotions, Dignities, and Domination depends upon it.)

The same might be said concerning the only Antient and true Strength of the Nation, the *Legal Militia*, and a *standing Army*. The *Militia* must, and can never be otherwise than for *English Liberty*, 'cause else it doth destroy it self; but a *standing Force* can be for nothing but *Prerogative*, by whom it hath its *idle Living* and *Subsistence*. I could instance also in many other Particulars, but our Inadvertency in this, is demonstration enough how much we are *cheated* by the common and hackney *Notions* imposed upon us; and this is almost the cause of all the Error we commit. For missing our true Footing, you see we have run in the mistaken Notion of being for the *Church* so long, till we have almost destroyed the *State*, and advanced *Prerogative* so much by suppressing *Nonconformity*, that it's well nigh beyond our reach or power to put Check to it; and had not Time, and but an indifferent Observation, shewed us how much we were abused in this

matter : And that a Lay-Conformist and a Fanstique can live as quietly and neighbourly together (would the Prelates but suffer them) as any in the World, we had ruined our selves past all recovery. For by our Bouying up the Bishops in their harsh and irreconcileable Spirit , in stead of Healing , we have so fed and nourished the Discontents throughout the Kingdom , that I think nothing keeps the Fire from flaming out afresh in another intestine War but the bare circumstance of Opportunity only ; and how long that will be able to restrain Passions that are made Wild by Oppression , is worthy a very serious Consideration ; and therefore there is hardly any thing more a Wonder to wise Men, than to see the Clergie run at this rate upon the Dissenters : wherefore since the Nonconformists have given so large and ample a Testimony of their willingness to live Peaceably, if yet notwithstanding the Clergie will not suffer them to be quiet in their Families and their Houses , I doubt, they may at one time or other, drive them into the Field, and then it may exceed their Divine Art to Conjure them down again ; for he sees but little, that sees not the English Temper is better to be Led than Driven. And therefore I think it would not be more a Vanity, to compel the Ladies to wear Queen Elizabeths Ruff , than to force the Nonconformists to be drest in her Religion.

Nor yet are these all the Arts we are under : For we have a Gang that Huff, and bear themselves high on the Countrey side, but earn only for the Court ; these lay out their Crafe in putting the House upon little trifling things, and spend and waste the Mettle thereof, upon such pittifull Pickadilloes, as 'tis next to a shame for an English Parliament so much as to mention. These start a fierce Dispute about some little Matter, and keep a bluster as if none were such faithful Patriots as they, when they do it on purpose only to while out the Time, and thin the House, by tiring the honest Country Gentry in so tedious, fruitless, and trifling attendance. Do but move things worthy a Parliament ; as that we may have our old known Rights of Annual Parliaments ascertained : That none that are or shall be Bribed by any Place or Office, shall ever

ever sit in this House : That Parliaments ought not to be Prorogued, Adjourned, or Dissolved, till all Petitions are heard, and the Aggrievances of the People redressed ; with many things more of as great Importance ; O then, forsooth, their pretended Loyalty (which in plain English is easily understood) will not abide such unmannerly and clownish Debates as these, and twenty such little shreds of Non-sense are impertinently urged in stead of Argument.

But further, These Country-Court Engines, after they have taken the Measures of the House, at the opening of every Session, by our thanks for the gracious Speech, which being the true Pulse of the House ; if it happen to come so hard as speaks us but faint and cool to the one thing necessary, (the matter of Money) then they know what will follow, that the Court will get no Grist that Sessions ; and though the Court in indignation could turn them Home on the Morrow, yet it must consult its Reputation a little, restrain its Resentments, and suffer them to sit about a six weeks, or two months, and then they assure the Court, since they can get no good by them, they shall take no harm ; and therefore to stop them from some worthy Undertaking, they by their feigned Zeal against Court-Corruptions, put them upon Impeaching some Treasurer, Councillor, or Minister of State ; and having spent half our time about this, the rest is spent for the Clergie upon Church-Work, which we have been so often put upon and tired with these many Sessions : Though Partiality unbecomes a Parliament, who ought to lay the whole Body that we represent a like easie, Nonconformists, as well as Conformists, for we were chosen by both, and with that intention that we should oppress neither. To lay one part therefore of the Body on a Pillow, and the other on a Rack, sorts our Wisdom little, but our Justice worse. You now see all our Shapes, save only the Indigents, concerning whom I need say but little, for their Votes are publickly saleable for a Guiney, and a Dinner every day in the Week, unless the House be upon Money, or a Minister of State : For that is their Hirvels ; and then they make their Earnings suit the Work they are about, which inclines them most constantly as sure

Cly-

Clyants to the Court. For what with gaining the one and saving the other, they now and then adventure a *Vote* on the *Country* side ; but the dread of *Dissolution* makes them strait rack about. The only thing we are obliged to them for, is, that they do nothing *Gratis*, but make every *Tax* as well Chargeable to the *Court*, as burthensome to the *Country*, and save no Mans *Neck*, but they break his *Purse*. And yet when all is said, did but the *Country Gentry* rightly understand the *interest* of *Liberty*, let the *Courtiers* and *Indigents* do what they could, they might yet at last deserve the Name of a worthy *English Parliament* ; Which that we may do, is not more passionately your desire, than it also is of,

Sir,

Your most bumble

Servant.

T. E

F I N I S.





